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ABSTRACT

A study determined differences, if any, in attitude toward reading between remedial reading adult learners and reading proficient adult learners. Subjects, 129 adult learners from both the high school and college populations in New Jersey, completed an attitude survey using a Likert scale. Subjects were identified as remedial or proficient readers based on proficiency tests. Results indicated that: (1) proficient high school students had a generally positive attitude toward reading, while high school remedial readers had a negative attitude toward reading; (2) college students, remedial or proficient, had generally positive attitudes toward reading; and (3) no statistically significant difference between the reading attitudes of the remedial high school and developmental college subjects. (Contains 29 references and 3 tables of data. The survey instrument and two appendixes of data are attached.) (RS)

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Attitudes Toward Reading In The

Adult Learner Population

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Masters of Arts

Kean College of New Jersey
April 1996

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ABSTRACT

This was a study conducted to determine differences, if any, in attitude toward reading, between remedial reading adult learners and reading proficient adult learners. A total sample of one hundred twenty-nine adult learners from both the high school and college populations, completed an attitude survey in the Fall of 1995. The survey consisted of eighteen statements regarding reading to which the learners reacted using a Likert Scale. Attitude differences were found to be significant within the high school population.

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Dedication

To Jackie, in gratitude for his loving support, and to Tigger, for her loyal companionship.

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Attitude has been shown to be a significant dimension in reading. (Alexander and Filler 1978). In 1983, J.E. Alexander stated that if attitude, the first prerequisite for reading is not positive, then it is likely that the other requirements; motivation, attention, comprehension and acceptance will not occur at all or will occur haphazardly. Much of the research regarding attitudes, however, has been concerned with the attitudes of children. (Parker and Paradis, 1986; c.f. Summers 1977). A 1961 study (Durkin) involved over five-thousand beginning readers and found that those students that entered school with strong positive attitudes toward books and their abilities to read were virtually insured success in becoming fully literate. A year later, a study by P.J.Groff concluded that the relationship between general reading ability and attitude toward reading as a school activity approached a "substantial level". In more recent research, L.D. Briggs, 1987, wrote that attitudes cause children to respond to a situation either favorably or unfavorably and thereby serve not only as a guide to behavior, but, have a profound effect on academic progress as well. According to Briggs, a positive attitude is a motivational stimulus that promotes and sustains learning, whereas, a negative attitude will result in just the opposite. He concluded that children who have positive attitudes will approach reading instruction with a greater possibility for success. Research, in general, indicates that children who are good readers, have a more positive attitude toward reading than poor readers. (Brown and Briggs 1989). This poor attitude may have a negative effect on reading achievement as, high interest in reading, tends to be associated with high achievement and low interest with failure in reading. (Brown and Briggs1989).

Relatively few studies have been conducted regarding the attitudes of adults toward reading. One such study, conducted by Dwyer and Joy 1980, examined reading attitude

development across the life span using a cross-sectional design that compared groups of children (6th graders) as well as several groups of adults. The adult sample included two groups of university students, remedial and regular Freshman English, high school graduate non-college adults and a group of adults over sixty years of age. Results indicated that all groups had an overall positive attitude toward reading, with no significant differences except for the non-college adults. This group showed a substantially lower attitude toward reading than all other groups with the biggest difference existing between the over sixty adult (most positive) and the non-college adult (least positive). Dwyer and Joy concluded that changes in attitude in the non-college adult were due to factors occurring after grade six. They further postulated that if the non-college adult, who probably experienced reading difficulties in later grades, had continued in reading programs beyond 6th grade, they may well have adequately mastered reading skills and maintained accompanying positive attitudes. Therefore, reading remediation should continue through to grade twelve, if necessary. In 1988, Dr. M. Cecil Smith, of Northern Illinois University, conducted a study to determine if a relationship existed between adult attitudes toward reading and actual reading behavior. A portion of the sample used was also studied to determine if a relationship existed between adult attitudes and reading ability. The total sample of eighty-four adults completed The Adult Survey of Reading Attitudes (ASRA) adapted from Wallbrown, Brown and Engin 1977, as well as several questionnaires regarding reading behavior. Fifty-six of the eighty-four adults also completed an abbreviated version of the Nelson-Denny Reading Test for use as a correlate of reading ability. Findings indicated that adults with positive attitudes toward reading spend more

time doing so and read a wider variety of materials than those adults with a negative attitude. A modest relationship was found between attitude and performance in that those adults with a high positive attitude scored significantly higher on the standardized reading test than those with negative attitudes. Smith concluded that a positive attitude does play an important role in adult reading behavior and is, at least, helpful, in motivating someone to successfully accomplish cognitive tasks.

Estimates of adult literacy levels vary and the definition takes on broad and changing boundaries. Most would agree, however, that a problem does exist and must be addressed. This is important in order for the United States to remain competitive in the world market place and ultimately to help insure that quality of life be improved and maintained. Since attitude has been shown to be of significance in reading where children are concerned, is this also a factor in the case of the adult learner? Does a relationship exist between reading attitudes of adults and their reading performance? If so, what are the implications for instruction? To provide some evidence on this topic, the following study was conducted.

Hypothesis

For the purposes of the study, it was hypothesized that there will be no significant differences in attitude toward reading between remedial reading adult learners and reading proficient adult learners.

Procedure

A total sample of 129 young adult learners, from both the high school and college populations, completed a Short Form Reading Attitude Survey adapted from Tunnell,

Calder and Justen III (1988). The survey consists of eighteen statements regarding reading to which the learners reacted using a Likert Scale. Total scores indicated positive or negative attitudes toward reading. The sample was divided into two groups; each consisting of remedial readers in remedial or developmental reading classes, and proficient readers in traditional English Composition classes.

The first group was comprised of eighty-four Juniors and Seniors at Raritan High School, in Hazlet, New Jersey. These students were identified as remedial or proficient readers on the basis of scores obtained on The High School Proficiency Test. This sample group consisted of thirty-six (18 male, 18 female) remedial reading students and forty-eight (21 male, 27 female) proficient readers. Raritan High School is located in a typical community in Monmouth County, New Jersey. Information obtained from The New Jersey Municipal Data Book (1993), indicates that Hazlet is a predominantly white, middle-class, suburban, community of approximately 22,000 residents.

The second sample group of adult learners consisted of forty-five (19 male, 26 female) college freshman students at Kean College of New Jersey located in the town of Union. These learners were identified as remedial or proficient on the basis of scores obtained on the New Jersey Basic Skills Test. Twenty (10 male, 10 female) were remedial students enrolled in a first semester developmental reading course, and twenty-five (9 male, 16 female) were proficient readers enrolled in a Freshman English Composition course. Kean College is a four year, comprehensive liberal arts school, comprised of approximately 12,000 students of various ethnic backgrounds, located in suburban Union County.

The surveys were reviewed and tabulated, without bias, by the author. The results were

analyzed, using t-tests, to determine differences, if any, in attitude between reading proficient adult learners and remedial reading adult learners.

Results

The results of the 129 surveys completed were analyzed according to three groups. A raw score of less than fifty-four, indicated a negative attitude toward reading, and a raw score of greater than fifty-four, indicated a positive attitude toward reading. In Table I, the

Table I

Reading Attitude Scores of High School Proficient vs High School Remedial Readers

Variable	Mean	STD	t Value
Proficient Readers (48)	65.63	9.72	5.88
Remedial Readers (36)	51.36	12.52	
Significance	less than .01		

attitude scores of the proficient high school readers were compared with the scores of the remedial readers. As can be seen in the table, the mean score of the remedial high school reader fell within the negative range, whereas, the mean score of the proficient high school reader fell within the positive range, and was more than fourteen points above the mean of the remedial reader. Analysis of these results produced a t of 5.88, indicating statistical significance below the .01 level.

Table II compared the raw scores of the proficient college reader and the

developmental college reader. Both mean scores indicated positive attitudes toward

Table II

Reading Attitude Scores of College Proficient Readers vs College Developmental Readers

Variable	Mean	STD	t Value
Proficient (25)	60.48	9.91	.874
Developmental (20)	57.45	13.33	
Signficance	NS		

reading. Although the proficient readers' scores were more than three points above the developmental readers, this was of no statistical significance.

In the final table, the attitude scores of the high school remedial readers were compared with those of the developmental college readers. In this comparison, even

Table III

Reading Attitude Scores of High School Remedial Readers vs College Developmental Readers

Variable	Mean	STD	t Value
H S Remedial (36)	51.36	12.52	-1.704
Coll Developmental (20)	57.45		
Significance	NS		

though the high school remedial reader scores indicated a negative attitude and the developmental college reader scores a positive attitude, with more than a six point difference between the two, no statistical significance exists.

Conclusions

A number of conclusions may be drawn from the statistical significance seen in the comparison of the reading attitudes of the high school students. To begin, the high school group represents the widest range in abilities within the entire sample. The remedial group consisted of sixteen and seventeen year old basic skills or nearly basic skills students, while the proficient group was largely honor students. One might expect, as research has shown (Brown and Briggs 1989), that the highest achieving students, who probably had the most positive experiences in learning to read both in and out of the classroom, are most likely to have the best attitude toward reading. The opposite would be true for the remedial students. This, then, may account for the significance in attitude differences.

The college group likely represents a smaller range in abilities. The developmental group probably did not consist of many basic skills level students since these students appear to be less likely to go on to a four year college (in fact, when polled, only 17% of the basic skills students indicated plans to attend a four year school, versus 95% of the honors group indicating plans for a four year school). The regular English Composition college students were not delineated as an "honors group", but, rather, represented a more heterogeneous group of proficient readers.

One might also conclude, that as a student matures, his/her attitude also matures. By the

time one reaches college level, perhaps the additional education and life experiences have helped him/her to regard reading with greater importance.

Even though the entire college sample indicated a positive attitude toward reading, the scores themselves, were only marginally positive. The attitude survey used, had a score range of eighteen to ninety points, with thirty-six points possible in either the positive or negative range. Each of these ranges can be divided into three equal parts; low, middle, and high, as a measure of degree. Based on this, both the developmental and the proficient college readers fell within the low positive range. By the same measure, even the proficient high school readers, although more positive, still fell within the low range. It is possible, that this reflects a low value of reading held by young adult learners, in general.

Implications

Findings of this study imply that reading attitude assessment of adult learners, at least, at the high school level, is important. Smith defines attitude toward reading as a " state of mind, accompanied by feelings and beliefs about reading, that make reading more or less likely to occur." Reading attitude, therefore, serves as a motivational device. If teachers can become aware of negative adult learner attitudes, perhaps they can encourage a more positive view, and, then, at least to some extent, help improve reading abilities.

In order to foster a positive attitude toward reading, the instructor can implement a number of strategies. Avoiding repetition of unsuccessful learning experiences can help a student to see reading in a more positive light, one in which he/she can achieve. Using relevant and interesting instructional materials can help accomplish this. Reading to

students on a regular basis, and encouraging outside, independent reading by the students, even at the simplest level, (ie.newspapers, magazines), can enhance motivation and help students to see reading as a source of enjoyment, not solely an educational necessity. A more positive attitude toward reading may, in turn, encourage students to apply themselves to a greater degree in the classroom, and thereby improve reading abilities. This will reinforce itself as the student experiences success and builds self confidence. Such positive experiences may encourage students to become more active readers which is clearly a method to increase proficiency. In addition, experiencing reading as a source of recreation, may enhance student lives overall. Although most would agree that changing attitudes would be a difficult task, in view of the findings of this study and the possible benefits of doing so, the attempt would seem to be worthwhile.

Another implication may present a significant challenge to educators. If positive attitudes toward reading by young adult learners, in general, are relatively weak, perhaps teachers need to make special efforts, such as those described above, from early childhood through to high school, and beyond, if necessary, in order to nurture and sustain positive attitudes into adulthood.

Finally, these findings suggest that further study is needed in assessment of attitudes toward reading in the adult learner population, and. in addition, investigation into the reasons for differences found, if any.

Attitudes Toward Reading In The Adult Learner Population

Related Literature

Smith's continuation of a longitudinal study begun by Kreitlow (1962, 1969) examined a variety of aspects of adults attitudes toward reading (1988). Smith used data from the sample of eighty-four adults that spanned over forty years, to examine the stability of reading attitude from early childhood to middle adult years. Earlier studies (Bullen 1972, Mikulecky 1976) reported a general decline in positive attitudes throughout the school years. Smith's findings suggested a moderately positive attitude that showed some degree of stability over time with no differences in attitude among children and older adults . He noted that early childhood measures of reading attitude were poor predictors of adult attitudes, likely, in part, due to the different types of measurements used between childhood and adulthood, but that early adult measures were the best predictors of adult attitude. He concluded that positive attitudes that are fostered, particularly during the later school years, will remain positive in adulthood. Smith also studied the sample responses to determine if differences existed among individuals with varying amounts of education and different occupations with regard to attitude toward reading. The sample represented a variety of occupations and educational levels ranging from high school diploma to post graduate degree. Results indicated that the college graduate group had significantly higher attitude scores than did the high school group. The professional group had significantly higher attitude scores than did the labor group. This group, in fact, had the lowest mean score. Smith then considered the same variables to determine if there were differences in perceptions of reading with respect to the relative importance of particular skills. The adults with more education had a more sophisticated view, noting higher order thinking skills as most important in reading. The lower educational group considered the use of resources

(i.e. dictionary) as the most important skills involved in reading. Three out of four occupational groups rated comprehension as the most important skills, whereas, the labor group rated use of resources as the most important. On the basis of these findings, Smith concluded that educational attainment, more so than occupation, affected reading attitude including perceptions of reading. He further concluded that an individual's perceptions about reading are likely to influence the development of reading skills. An accurate perception may foster development of mature skills and contribute to lifelong reading activity. He also submitted that positive reading attitudes, as well as good reading skills, should occur simultaneously in young readers in order that they may become lifelong readers.

In yet another study conducted by Smith (1991), reading attitude scores were compared between three samples of adult readers at a large mid-western university. The sample consisted of freshman developmental reading students, upper division undergraduate students involved in a teacher education program and non-faculty employees representing a broad range of educational and occupational backgrounds. Results of the comprehension subtest of The Nelson Denny Reading Test indicated that the developmental students averaged at the 11th percentile for first semester students. The study was undertaken to determine differences, if any, in attitude between good and poor readers. All participants completed The Adult Survey of Reading Attitudes (ASRA), which consisted of forty statements concerned with an individual's reading attitudes that were divided into five subscales. These subscales included; 1) reading activity and enjoyment, 2) reading anxiety

and difficulty, 3) social reinforcement 4) learning modes and 5) assisting others. Significant differences were found among the groups on four out of five subscales. The developmental students reported higher levels of reading anxiety and difficulty, less enjoyment and indicated preference for modes other than reading for learning in comparison to the other two groups. The teacher education students were more likely to assist others than the other two groups and finally, there were no differences found concerning social reinforcement. Based on these results, Smith concluded that the developmental students had very poor attitudes toward reading and that The ASRA was effective in providing useful information that could be used in instructional planning for developmental students. He also cautioned against drawing any cause and effect relationships between attitude and ability. A regression analysis revealed that reading attitude accounted for only 10 percent of the variance on the same comprehension subtest of The Nelson Denny Reading Test. Smith concluded, then, that apparently, considerable variation in attitude is independent of reading achievement.

A 1984 study (Ferguson and Bitner) was conducted to determine if there were any differences in attitude toward reading between developmental reading college students and regular freshman English students. This study also looked at self-concept levels and basic learning styles. The mostly white sample, ranging in age from seventeen to twenty-one years, responded to the Mikulecky Reading Attitude Measure, which describes the five stages (Attending, Responding, Valuing, Organization and Characterization) an individual passes through in developing attitudes toward reading. Both groups responded similarly to most items, viewing reading as a part of life that both the reader and others see as crucial.

Differences surfaced however, in items in the Responding stage. The regular freshman English students seemed willing to read, in fact, chose to read and enjoyed the activity. The reverse was true for developmental students. The authors concluded that while developmental students realize that reading is valuable, in actual practice, they avoid the activity. An interesting side note of this study, regarding attitude, was that results revealed that 64 percent of the developmental students blamed themselves for their poor reading skills and the remaining 36 percent blamed teachers.

A similar study involving developmental college students was conducted by Cindy Gillespie in 1993. This study looked at a variety of aspects regarding adult attitudes toward reading. Gillespie noted that affective factors may be influential in motivating students to read to learn or to read for pleasure, but, were largely ignored. The sample consisted of 191 students, at a mid-western university, enrolled in a developmental reading course as a result of scores received on the Reading Comprehension subtest of the Scholastic Aptitude Test. They responded to an open-ended questionnaire involving attitudes toward reading, self concepts related to reading and recollections of learning to read at home and at school. The results found that over 50 percent of the respondents believed reading to be a basically skills oriented procedure or did not respond at all, indicating a very narrow definition of reading. Approximately as many students considered themselves readers as non-readers. This answer was most often based on whether or not they liked reading rather than on their definition of reading. None of the students appeared to have developed strong attitudes toward reading at home, in fact, there was no evidence to suggest positive or negative

attitudes were developed at home. Consistent with Reed (1989), these students felt that their reading skills were sufficient for college level work and therefore they shouldn't be in the developmental course. Gillespie suggested that based on the narrowness of their definition of reading, this attitude was quite logical. Seventy-one percent of the respondents indicated they found several hours per week to read for pleasure, 80 percent found time to read for class assignments, yet, students had a limited knowledge of strategies for learning from a textbook. The most frequent responses to the question regarding recollections about learning to read in school was reading orally in groups, phonics and workbook pages. Neither negative nor positive connotations were attached to these, however, negative recollections were reported by over one third of the students. Therefore, Gillespie concluded that positive attitudes toward reading were not developed for these students while in school. Two thirds of the respondents reported that the best reading experience prior to entering college was reading novels. Seventy-two percent reported oral reading and book reports as the worst experience prior to college. Based on all of these findings, Gillespie concluded that attitude assessment was vital in that it would provide many implications for instruction. Such an assessment could help determine whether emotional factors, reading problems, studying difficulties or misconceptions about the reading process were impairing student progress in reading. Gillespie also called for change in college developmental courses. Curriculums should employ relevant and interesting materials and deal not only with improving skills, but, also in broadening student views of the reading process. Nurturing positive attitudes and encouraging reading for pleasure will encourage the development of life long readers.

Another study, (Rachel, Leonard & Jackson 1991) looked at reading habits, which often reflect attitude, of 217 adult learners from two junior colleges in Mississippi, enrolled in ABE or GED programs. Reading levels ranged, mainly, from fifth to eighth grade with some beyond. Students responded to a questionnaire that examined reading habits. Analysis of the results suggested a somewhat positive attitude toward reading. Reading habits revealed that the respondents were by no means non-readers, but, did read less than the general population. Most material read was educational, the least were job related and recreational. Students were generally not book owners, but, did, either buy or subscribe to newspapers or magazines. Forty-four percent classified themselves as "good readers" and most claimed to have read a book within the last six months, although when asked what type of book had been read in the last six months, the numbers thinned significantly. Those who admittedly had not read a book, most frequently cited lack of time as the reason.

In a related area, Cynthia Morawski and Barbara Brunhuber conducted a 1993 study comparing early reading recollections of thirty-two proficient and thirty-two remedial adult learners. In a previous study, (Morawski 1990), suggested that a teacher's knowledge of a students' earliest recollections of learning to read played an important role in helping to identify and understand the students' perceptions that contributed to his or her unresponsiveness to reading. This study, therefore, was conducted in order to identify any significant differences in perception that would be important for intervention and prevention of reading difficulties. Students responded to several specific questions, whose answers were analyzed based on several variables, one of which was overall affective tone, which

can be reflected in attitude. The results indicated significant differences between the two groups regarding affective tone. Eighty-one percent of the remedial readers' recollections had an overall negative tone. Learning to read was described as anxiety provoking and discouraging. Sixty-eight percent of the proficient readers' responses had a positive tone, noting challenge and satisfaction from learning to read. The authors concluded that for the remedial readers, learning to read was not seen as satisfying nor pleasurable. This would most likely cause them to avoid reading and thereby place them at a serious disadvantage to further development of reading abilities. For the proficient readers, the challenge and satisfaction derived from learning to read would motivate them to become active readers which would insure reading success and further development of reading abilities. In terms of instructional implications, the authors suggested that in order that developmental students succeed in reading , they need to be encouraged to view reading in a positive manner, by being exposed to instruction that is relevant, functional, enjoyable and success oriented.

Mary A. Duchein and Donna L. Mealey of Louisiana University, addressed the topic of aliteracy, which certainly is a statement of attitude toward reading. They conducted a 1993 study of developmental college students in order to begin to probe the nature of the students' aliteracy. Duchein and Mealey acknowledged the importance of this problem by noting that aliteracy and illiteracy were similar in that both have the potential of having serious negative impacts. Such outcomes could be, widening the gap between social classes and even eroding the democratic process (Baroody, Thimmesch 1984). The sample of ninety college freshmen at a large Southwestern university, responded to a number of questions that examined their domestic and academic pasts as they related to reading.

Students were also assigned a novel to read toward the end of the semester, about which they were later asked to convey their opinions. In general, the responses revealed that reading was a treasured part of the early experiences of the students. Unfortunately, however, it did not remain a consistent activity in which they were surrounded by nor immersed in. More than two thirds of the respondents reported very positive memories of being read to at home, but the practice seemed to end once they entered school. More than half reported positive memories of being read to by teachers in school, however, this practice also deteriorated in the middle grades through high school. The few experiences noted in later grades made significant positive impressions. In addition, students who had sustained silent reading periods, reported that this time was important and valuable to them, but, not frequent enough. In fact, the students indicated that had these periods of sustained silent reading been continued, they might have continued to enjoy reading. Two thirds of the students expressed considerable difficulty in maintaining interest in reading due to social, physical, and academic demands of adolescence. These excuses seemed acceptable to them especially in light of the fact that reading no longer seemed to be considered important at home or in the classroom. In addition, they stated that being "forced" to read texts in school took the enjoyment out of it. With regard to reading the assigned novel, 57 percent reported an initial negative reaction to the assignment. Once into the novel, however, reactions changed dramatically; 79 percent now reported positive reactions. The authors concluded that although early reading experiences were quite positive and treasured memories, little time was devoted to this or to students reading in general. Developmental

students apparent dislike for reading and subsequent lack of reading, may very well contribute to poor comprehension, difficulty with higher level thinking skills and limited vocabularies. The authors concurred with Spiegel (1989), that reading to students in school generated interest, enthusiasm and excitement, all necessary to nurture positive attitudes that would stimulate students to read on their own. The fact that remedial readers decode and comprehend on the literal level may, in part, be due to negative attitudes that lead to the avoidance of reading. According to the authors, these findings clearly reinforced those of Anderson et.al; 1985, Cullinan 1989, Durkin 1966 and Strickland & Morrow 1989, that reading aloud to students was an extremely important component for student success in reading. In terms of instructional implications, Morawski and Brunhuber suggested that college developmental reading emphasize strategic reading and use authentic, rather than contrived texts. Teachers need to know more about aliteracy in order to help students to become successful and lifelong readers.

Additional studies of adult learner attitudes involve other adult populations. For example, in 1984, John F. Check and Sharon Toellner compared the reading habits of adults in nursing homes and similar aged adults living outside of an institution. Part of this study, again utilizing a questionnaire, also considered attitude. The sample consisted of forty adults, ranging in age from seventy to ninety and ranging from elementary to college level in of education. There were no significant differences in attitude found between the two groups. A generally positive attitude was demonstrated by the fact that most respondents indicated that they enjoyed reading at least to some extent. Only the nursing home, 70-79 yr. old group, expressed any negativism by indicating they were not interested in reading.

Both groups indicated that early experiences of seeing their parents read influenced their own positive attitudes toward reading. Reading was considered an integral and valuable part of everyday activities that helped them to be aware of and understand current events, obtain personal enjoyment and relaxation and satisfy spiritual needs. Surprisingly, only eight percent saw reading improvement as a worthwhile goal. Most of the reading done, 85 percent, was in the form of newspapers and magazines rather than books. The authors concluded that reading was a significant process for all age groups in the study regardless of residence. However, based on the preference for newspapers and magazines, the authors felt this reflected the low value of reading held by our society. Reading seems to be done mostly for information, with leisure reading apparently rare.

T. Hansell Stevenson and Jean A. Voelkel (1992) conducted a study involving a prison population, which, according to Kozal (1985), represents the largest concentration of non-proficient adult readers in the United States. The study was conducted to determine if there were any differences between the inmates regarding their views as to the factors (environmental, psychological, physical, educational) which they attributed to their current reading levels. The all male sample, seventy-five percent black or hispanic, twenty-five percent caucasian, ranging in age from nineteen to fifty-two, was part of a literacy program at the institution. They were divided into two groups of sixteen each. The first group, the student group, had between seven to twelve years of education. The second group represented the tutor group, which had from nine to fifteen years of school and achieved a higher level of reading ability on a standardized test administered to each member in the

sample. The respondents answered twenty questions on a survey and completed an open-ended questionnaire as well. The results of the questionnaire failed to reveal any specific causal factor for either group, however, the responses to the open-ended questionnaire did reveal some significant information. These findings clearly indicated that the students felt that the reasons for their poor reading abilities involved psychological factors. They noted past experiences and personal causes such as missing days in school, not taking school seriously, not taking time to read, feeling they were slow learners and not understanding big words, as factors leading to their current reading levels. The tutor group also reflected the emphasis on personal responsibility, but, added that they now had a clear purpose for reading. They saw reading as, a way to improve reading skills and learn about themselves and the world, as a positive activity and, at least, that certain books were interesting. The authors concluded that the better readers (tutors) then, had a more positive attitude toward reading in that they saw reading as having a valid purpose. The less proficient readers (students) failed to see reading as a source of knowledge and/or pleasure. The authors felt that these results suggested that teachers might use this to find methods and materials to help develop a sense of purpose to reading for their students and encourage enjoyment of the activity as well.

Fagan (1988), also looked at a prison population when he investigated the concepts of reading and the nature of the process for fifty-two low literate adults; twenty-six prisoners and twenty-six adults in mainstream society. The purpose of the study was to gain more insight on the metacognitive knowledge of these two groups, as he felt that concepts affect attitude or how tasks are approached. A gap between what a learner expects and what is

actually provided in a literacy program may be detrimental to literacy development. Both groups, who averaged below a ninth grade achievement level, were asked to make associations between photos and various reading tasks and to respond to some interview questions. Both groups saw reading as a skills oriented, mainly decoding process and believed that focusing on this would help improve their reading abilities. For example, when asked what the "best reader" might do, both groups responded that a good reader sounds out words. Comprehension and pleasure were low priorities in terms of key characteristics of good readers. When asked about memories of being taught to read, seventy percent of the prisoners and fifty percent of the mainstream adults remembered being taught to sound out words and learn the alphabet. Fagan's conclusions were consistent with those of various other studies, such as, Amoroso 1984, Gambrell and Heathington 1981, Johnson 1985 , that low literate adults hold a very restricted view of reading. This, as Amoroso 1984, states, is counterproductive to their goals for becoming better readers. Fagan also agreed with Gorman, 1981, that a restricted view is the result of the manner in which someone is taught. Based on these findings, Fagan noted a few instructional implications. First, teachers need to be aware of student beliefs and attitudes in order to be able to deal with them appropriately. They must convey to students the attitude and belief that reading is a meaning centered activity. Providing strategies and activities within meaningful contexts rather than focusing on the individual skills involved, will help students to incorporate new attitudes and perceptions regarding reading, into their value systems.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A

Short Form Reading Attitude Survey

Name of School _____ male _____ female _____ age _____

This is a survey to measure attitudes toward reading by adult learners. Read each statement and write the number that tells most closely how you feel about the statement.

1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Undecided 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree

_____ 1. Reading is an important part of my life.

_____ 2. I read often in my spare time.

_____ 3. I believe that better jobs are available to those with good reading skills.

_____ 4. I would rather read a book than watch TV.

_____ 5. I like to buy books and have a place to keep them at home.

_____ 6. When I find the kind of books I like, reading can be enjoyable.

_____ 7. I like to share a good book with a friend.

_____ 8. I usually check out a book when I go to the library.

* _____ 9. Reading books is a waste of time.

_____10. I would like to belong to a book club.

_____11. Reading makes me feel good.

* _____12. I seldom read except when I have to.

_____13. Reading is an enjoyable way to learn.

_____14. I like to read before I go to bed.

_____15. I often look for extra books or articles to read about something which interests me.

_____16. I like to look through the books at the library.

* _____17. Reading is boring.

_____18. I usually read books during vacation times.

RAW SCORE is equal to the sum total of the responses. Note: Statements with an asterisk are stated negatively, therefore, the polarity of these items is reversed (5=1, 4=2, 3=3, 2=4, and 1=5).

Appendix B

High School Student Sample - Raw Scores (#1-84)

Remedial

1. **54**	10. **57**	19. **46**	28. **55**
2. **44**	11. **46**	20. **52**	29. **55**
3. **45**	12. **31**	21. **26**	30. **63**
4. **29**	13. **68**	22. **45**	31. **52**
5. **67**	14. **41**	23. **70**	32. **62**
6. **43**	15. **59**	24. **43**	33. **50**
7. **54**	16. **53**	25. **52**	34. **56**
8. **47**	17. **45**	26. **44**	35. **66**
9. **27**	18. **86**	27. **58**	36. **58**

Proficient

37. **67**	49. **60**	61. **66**	73. **58**
38. **73**	50. **65**	62. **53**	74. **70**
39. **76**	51. **62**	63. **54**	75. **48**
40. **62**	52. **48**	64. **78**	76. **57**
41. **77**	53. **53**	65. **77**	77. **72**
42. **77**	54. **77**	66. **75**	78. **66**
43. **71**	55. **77**	67. **62**	79. **71**
44. **70**	56. **67**	68. **66**	80. **54**
45. **77**	57. **86**	69. **78**	81. **66**
46. **73**	58. **72**	70. **57**	82. **44**
47. **67**	59. **71**	71. **59**	83. **59**
48. **58**	60. **67**	72. **57**	84. **50**

Appendix C

College Student Sample Raw - Scores (#85-129)

Developmental

85. **59**	90. **58**	95. **58**	100. **59**
86. **64**	91. **80**	96. **54**	101. **90**
87. **75**	92. **47**	97. **40**	102. **69**
88. **43**	93. **46**	98. **52**	103. **59**
89. **60**	94. **40**	99. **52**	104. **44**

Proficient

105. **51**	111. **61**	117. **74**	123. **71**
106. **77**	112. **52**	118. **35**	124. **46**
107. **65**	113. **60**	119. **59**	125. **72**
108. **63**	114. **60**	120. **63**	126. **70**
109. **74**	115. **49**	121. **68**	127. **59**
110. **56**	116. **53**	122. **53**	128. **59**
			129. **62**